

# EXPLAINER: Causes of the protests in Cuba



Anti-government protesters march in Havana, Cuba, Sunday, July 11, 2021. Hundreds of demonstrators took to the streets in several cities in Cuba to protest against ongoing food shortages and high prices of foods

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**Photos** 1

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HAVANA (AP) — The street protests that erupted over the weekend in Cuba were the biggest at least since those a quarter century ago, when then-President Fidel Castro personally went into the streets to calm crowds of thousands furious over dire shortages that gripped the island following the collapse of the Soviet Union, which had long backed its socialist ally.

## WHAT ARE PROTESTERS DEMANDING?

Many expressed anger over long lines and shortages of food and medicines, as well as repeated electricity outages. Some demanded a faster pace of vaccination against COVID-19. But there were also calls for political change in a country governed by the Communist Party for some six

decades. Some demonstrators chanted “Liberty!” “Down with the dictatorship!” and “Fatherland and life!” — a twist on the revolutionary slogan, “Fatherland or death!”

“It’s time for things to change. The situation is critical,” said Cristian Veliz, a 22-year-old construction worker.

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